

## *7. Alternatives to the Proposed Project*

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### **7.9 PARK/LAND SWAP ALTERNATIVE**

The Park/Land Swap Alternative has been added for informational purposes to the Final EIR in response to comments received during the public review of the Draft EIR.

This alternative would require a trade of properties (land swap) between the County of Orange and the Diocese of Orange County. Nine properties throughout Orange County were assessed for a potential swap with the Springs at Bethsaida project site in North Tustin. Of those, a 9.5-acre area in the City of Irvine was selected for further analysis. The Irvine site is located northwest of the intersection of Irvine Boulevard and Alton Parkway (see Figure 7-10, Alternative Site Location), on the former Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) El Toro Air Force Base, near the proposed Orange County Great Park. Access to the Irvine site would be via a private access road off Irvine Boulevard.

The County of Orange owns this property through a grant deed from the City of Irvine. The land swap would require a Resolution and a majority approval vote by the County of Orange Board of Supervisors to acquire the Irvine site as well as a finding that the property to be transferred is not necessary for County purposes and the property being received is necessary for County purposes. Further, Government Code Section 25365 requires the property be “of equal value.” The County would then exchange the Irvine site with the Diocese for the Springs at Bethsaida site in North Tustin. The Irvine site would be developed as a senior citizen housing project, and the North Tustin site would be developed as a neighborhood park. Development of the senior community in Irvine pursuant to the Park/Land Swap Alternative would require the County of Orange to process a zone change and entitlements through the City of Irvine. The site is currently zoned Exclusive Agriculture (1.1) and the land use designation in the City of Irvine General Plan is “Orange County Great Park.”

Although an EIR must consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives and compare their environmental impacts, it does not have to identify and analyze alternatives that would not meet project objectives or have to discuss every possible permutation of alternatives. An EIR need not consider an alternative whose effect cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is remote and speculative. (CEQA 15126.6 (f)(3)). This alternative is not feasible because of the uncertainty of accomplishing it in a reasonable amount of time. It would require action by the County of Orange, the City of Irvine, and the property is not owned by the Diocese of Orange. This alternative would not meet the basic objectives established for the project. A park in the North Tustin location would also not provide senior housing opportunities within the North Tustin area to meet a growing social need in unincorporated Orange County, it would not fulfill a faith-based mission of the Diocese of Orange County in Tustin since it would no longer be owned by the Diocese, and it would not provide a range of housing opportunities consistent with Land Use and Design Goal C of the NTSP. The development of the senior living facility on an alternative site in the City of Irvine would not meet many of the project objectives because the basic objective of the project is to provide special needs housing to serve the population of North Tustin and unincorporated North Orange County. One of the goals is to serve an aging immediately surrounding residential community and although this area in the future may be adjacent to residential (e.g., Heritage Fields), currently this area is surrounded by vacant land, warehouses, and the Musick jail. This is not a residential area and there are no community serving amenities. Therefore, from a location standpoint, this site does not reasonably accomplish project objectives. Finally, the Irvine site is not zoned for residential uses and has no vehicle trips assigned to it under the approved Orange County Great Park Master Plan. For all of these reasons, this site has been rejected as infeasible as an



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alternate development site for the proposed senior living community. However, this analysis is provided for informational purposes, as requested by public comments.

The total acreage of the Irvine site is approximately 2.25 acres larger than the North Tustin site. The larger Irvine site could potentially allow for additional dwelling units and/or allow for aboveground parking instead of a subterranean parking structure. However, in order for this analysis to allow any meaningful comparison, it is assumed that development of a senior citizen housing community on the Irvine site would have the same number of units (153 units) but would not require a subterranean parking garage. With this alternative, two sites would be developed (the Irvine site with residential housing and the North Tustin site with a neighborhood park). Therefore, the Park/Land Swap Alternative must consider the impact of developing both parcels when comparing it to the proposed project.

The use of the North Tustin site as a community park would provide additional park space in the North Tustin Specific Plan (NTSP) area. This project alternative would add approximately 7.25 acres of park to the NTSP area. A conceptual site plan has been developed by the Foothill Tustin Community Association (FCA). Figure 7-11, *Alternative Park Site Plan*, shows a preliminary land use plan for a park on the proposed project site (prepared on behalf of FCA by Bauer Planning and Environmental Services).

Possible amenities/characteristics of the park are listed below. These amenities/characteristics are used to help establish the parameters used for this alternative analysis.

- Provide a daytime passive environment
- No formalized field sports
- Pathways with park benches
- A tot play area
- No night lighting or barbeques
- Daytime parking for up to 20 cars
- A one-mile jogging path
- A comfort station
- An arbor

### **7.9.1 Land Use and Relevant Planning**

This land swap alternative would require a zoning code amendment in the City of Irvine. The site's zoning would be changed from Exclusive Agriculture (1.1) to Medium-High Residential (2.4). The land use designation would stay the same (Orange County Great Park) under the City of Irvine General Plan.

The North Tustin site is designated as RSF 100 in the NTSP. This Land Use District allows parks and playgrounds as permitted uses. To preserve the park as open space, a zone change would be required to change the NTSP Land Use District to open space/recreation (OSR). Further, a General Plan Amendment would be processed to change the site's Suburban Residential designation to Open Space. At the Irvine site, a zone change would need to be approved by the City.

Development of the senior citizen residential project in Irvine would remove the project from North Tustin and eliminate the need for deep setbacks to provide privacy to the existing neighborhood. Development of a medium-high density residential project on the Irvine site is not consistent with the current City of

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Irvine General Plan land use designation and would require a Zone Change. The site is located in a developing part of the City of Irvine, where few community serving facilities, amenities, and infrastructure are available for senior housing. It is also located very near Musick Jail and industrial uses within Irvine Spectrum. As a result, there is a greater potential for land use conflicts between the proposed residential uses and the existing institutional and industrial uses.

Development of a park in North Tustin would not provide additional residential units in the NTSP. With the exception of development of a project that limits visual intrusion and preserves the privacy to existing neighboring residential uses, this alternative would not meet any of the project objectives. It would provide special needs housing, but not in the North Tustin area.

Land use impacts would be similar between the two alternative scenarios.

### **7.9.1 Geology and Soils**

Development of a senior citizen housing project on the Irvine alternate site would require less grading (assuming a subterranean structure is not built). As with the proposed project site, the alternative site location is not on or close to known fault lines. The potential for liquefaction is also low for the alternative site location, as indicated on the Orange County General Plan. The construction of the proposed project on the alternative site location would be required to follow the same engineering requirements as the proposed project to ensure building stability and to meet California building standards for earthquake safety. Groundwork at the project site alternative would be reduced if the subterranean garage is not built. However, the alternative site has a larger area which could cause more soil erosion during site construction. Geology and soils impacts would be similar between the two project sites.

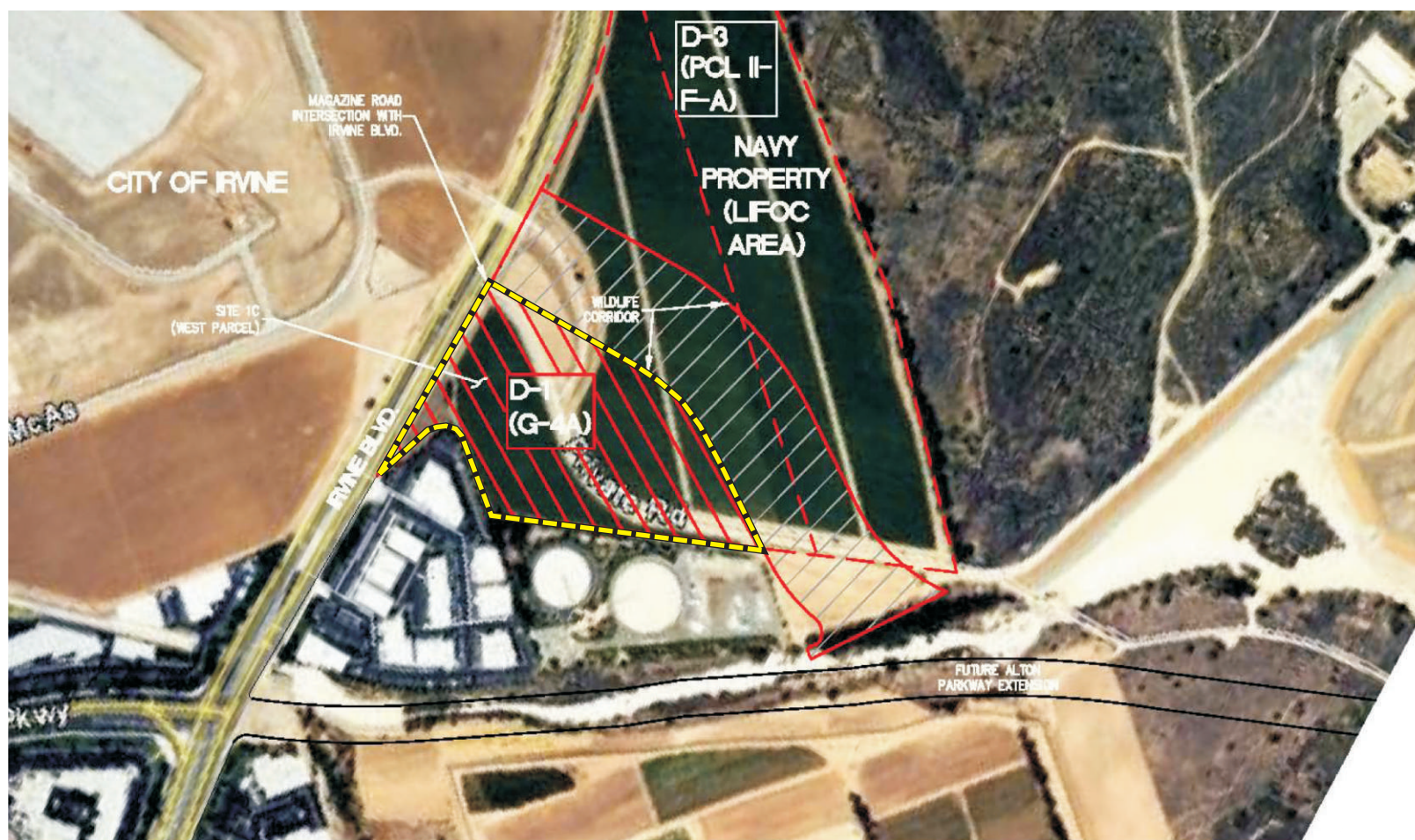


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## Alternative Site Location (Irvine)



Alternative Site Location

Source:

*The Springs at Bethsaida Senior Living Project Final EIR*

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## Alternative Park Site Plan (North Tustin)



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Source: Bauer Planning and Environmental Services 2010

The Springs at Bethsaida Senior Living Project Final EIR

The Planning Center • Figure 7-11

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Construction of park on the North Tustin site would also require less grading than the proposed project. The project site slopes downward approximately 14-feet from the northeast corner to the southwest corner of the site. In addition, there is a 7-foot drop in grade from the north property line to the south property line. Onsite grading would still be needed to balance out the site's slope, but not nearly as much grading as would be needed to create a subterranean level. Overall, both the proposed project and this alternative would be exposed to the same seismic hazards, expansive soils and risk of liquefaction. With both, the risk of substantial soil erosion impacts to off-site areas, such as nearby streets and storm drains, if erosion from the project site were not controlled during construction. With this alternative, the risk of soil erosion could be slightly reduced because of reduced grading. Additionally, since the underground parking structure would not be needed, ground excavation would not be required.

Although no significant and unavoidable geology and soils impacts were identified with the proposed project, the development of a park at the North Tustin site would slightly reduce geology and soils impacts because of reduced excavation.

### **7.9.2 Hydrology and Water Quality**

The proposed project would improve the current drainage pattern on the North Tustin site but it would also increase the amount of runoff generated with increased impermeable surfaces, requiring the construction of a 0.57 acre-foot capacity detention basin. The construction of a park on the same project site would reduce the amount of stormwater runoff because the soil would remain more permeable as compared to the proposed project due to reduced impermeable surface area. The majority of the project site would be covered with vegetated and permeable surfaces. As with the proposed project, impacts to the project site would be less than significant under this alternative. Therefore, the hydrology and water quality impacts of this alternative would be less than those of the proposed project.



The Irvine alternate site is currently unpaved and vacant. Development of a senior living facility would require on- and offsite improvements to connect the facility to existing stormwater drainage systems. The natural drainage of the project site would be altered with development of the site. As with the proposed project, a hydrological assessment would need to be prepared to determine the post-construction drainage flow rates and to determine the appropriate infrastructure to be constructed. Development of both sites, regardless of use, requires preparation of a Final WQMP and compliance with the Orange County Drainage Area Management Plan (DAMP).

Overall, this alternative would reduce stormwater runoff at the North Tustin site but would introduce new impermeable surfaces to the Irvine site. Therefore, the hydrology and water quality impacts of this alternative would be similar to those of the proposed project.

### **7.9.3 Transportation and Traffic**

Six key intersections are analyzed in the traffic impact assessment for the proposed Bethsaida senior citizen residential project. These intersections currently operate with acceptable LOS conditions. Under opening year 2013 and future year 2035 scenarios with proposed project, these intersections would continue to operate with acceptable LOS levels. Impacts to study area intersections are less than significant and adequate parking would be provided onsite to serve the senior citizen community.

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Development of the North Tustin site as a park would generate substantially fewer vehicle trips than the proposed senior living community. Using an ITE trip rate of 1.59 trips per day per acre, the park would generate approximately 12 trips per day. On Sundays, the park would generate approximately 116 trips per day (ITE trip rate of 16 weekend trips per day per acre). Therefore, there would be substantially fewer trips generated from the North Tustin site since these trips would now be occurring at the Irvine site.

Traffic impacts to the Irvine site would need to be determined with a traffic impact assessment. The Irvine alternative site's impact to key intersections would need to be assessed at opening year and a future year, including a consideration of the cumulative impacts with the proposed development at the Orange County Great Park. The City of Irvine has adopted an overall trip capacity for the Orange County Great Park. As a result, trips would need to be acquired from other uses within the Great Park in order to construct the Springs at Bethsaida at the Irvine site. However, provided the Orange Great Park stays within its adopted trip budget, it is assumed that impacts would remain less than significant.

Overall, project-related traffic impacts in North Tustin would be reduced under the Park/Land Swap Alternative since the park land use would generate fewer project-related trips. Regional traffic is not likely to increase significantly despite development of two project sites (North Tustin and Irvine).

### **7.9.4 Air Quality**

Development of the proposed senior citizen community in North Tustin would have significant and unavoidable short-term air quality impacts related to construction activities because of the proposed underground parking facility. The proposed underground parking facility would be eliminated under this land swap alternative. Development of a park in North Tustin would reduce construction air quality impacts to less than significant levels because grading and earthwork activities would be substantially reduced.

With development of the Irvine alternative site location, operational air quality impacts would be similar to the proposed project. Since the project would remain the same size and generate the same number of vehicle trips, it would generate the same amount of regional emissions within the South Coast Air Basin. Development of either project site would result in more vehicle miles travelled within the region.

Overall, significant and unavoidable construction air quality impacts would be avoided in North Tustin if it is developed as a park. Operational impacts would also be substantially reduced, although these were not identified as significant and unavoidable under the proposed project.

However, Park/Land Swap Alternative must consider the cumulative impact of developing both parcels. Compared to the proposed project, construction-related air quality impacts of developing both sites would be reduced. Operational air quality impacts would be increased, but would remain less than significant. Therefore, air quality impacts have the potential to be reduced during construction though increased during operation.

### **7.9.5 Noise**

The proposed project would have significant and unavoidable construction noise impacts because of the duration of the construction phase (21 months) and the type of construction methods used for the site.

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The alternative park land use at the project site would still require site construction and grading, generating noise levels of a similar magnitude, but the duration of construction would be less. For instance, the construction of the park would not require the subterranean parking structure or large structures and it would occur over a shorter period of time. This would reduce, but not eliminate, project-related construction noise impacts. Although not identified as significant and unavoidable, operational noise impacts would also be reduced.

The Irvine alternative site location would require site grading and construction activities similar to the proposed project. Surrounding offices would be impacted by elevated noise levels during construction. The operation of the project at the alternative site location would generate a similar number of vehicle trips and operational noise impacts are expected to be similar.

Overall, the Park/Land Swap Alternative would reduce significant and unavoidable construction noise impacts in North Tustin to less than significant levels as compared to the proposed project because grading activities would be less.

### **7.9.6 Aesthetics**

The use of landscaping buffers and architectural design features allow the proposed senior citizen housing project to blend in with the surrounding land uses. Impacts to aesthetics were found to be less than significant.

Development of the North Tustin site as a park would also have less than significant impacts on aesthetics. The park would mostly be comprised of open space accompanied by trees, ornamental landscaping, a children's play ground, a shelter, and walking/jogging trails. These features would not negatively affect the aesthetic character of the project site or affect views of surrounding scenic view resources. Although no significant and unavoidable aesthetic impacts were identified, the park would have less impact to aesthetic resources than the proposed residential project.

There are fewer surrounding land uses that would be affected by the construction of a senior living facility in Irvine. Much of the surrounding area is vacant with the exception of the office and light industrial land uses to the south. The land immediately to the north, east, and west is primarily used for agriculture. Aesthetic resource impacts would also be less than those of the proposed project. Both would continue to be less than significant.

### **7.9.7 Cultural Resources**

Since the proposed project involves a subterranean parking garage, substantial ground excavation work would be required. The construction of a park at the North Tustin site would reduce the amount of grading and depth of earthwork, therefore reducing the potential to uncover cultural resources.

Development of the Irvine alternative site location would also require some ground excavation. However, since the alternative site is larger than the proposed project site, the subterranean garage may not be required. This would reduce the amount of earthwork required and reduce potential for uncovering cultural resources.



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No significant and unavoidable impacts to cultural resources were identified as part of the proposed project. However, the Park/Land Swap Alternative would reduce impacts at both the project site and the alternative site locations.

### **7.9.8 Recreation**

Unlike the proposed project, the use of the North Tustin site as a park would not include residential construction. This means it is not required to contribute park fees to fund future neighborhood parks and other recreational amenities. This alternative would provide new recreational facilities.

The development of the senior living facility on the Irvine site would require the project to pay fees to the City of Irvine to fund park space in the City. Recreational impacts would be similar between development in North Tustin and in Irvine.

There are no significant and unavoidable recreation impacts for the Park/Land Swap Alternative or for the proposed senior citizen housing project. Building a park in North Tustin would provide additional recreation facilities, but would not reduce recreation impacts. Therefore, the Park/Land Swap Alternative would have similar impacts as the proposed project.

### **7.9.9 Hazards**

Development of the Tustin site with a park or a senior citizen housing project would not involve the use, manufacture, or storage of any substantial volumes of hazardous materials or otherwise generate a significant fire hazard. The site conditions of the Irvine site are unknown. The site is used for agricultural uses and there is a potential for soil contamination. Although speculative, it is anticipated that impacts related to hazards would continue to be less than significant.

### **7.9.10 Public Services**

The proposed project does not have any significant and unavoidable impacts related to public services. This alternative would reduce the need for library services at the project site since the park would not cause an increase in population. Development of the Irvine site would generate similar demands on public services, including OCFA and medical emergency calls for service similar to the proposed project. These demands would need to be met by the City of Irvine service providers (fire, police, park, and library services). OCFA provides service to the City of Irvine, therefore impacts are expected to remain the same. Development of a park has the potential to result in additional calls for service to the Orange County Sheriff related to vandalism or loitering at the public park. Overall, onsite public service impacts would be reduced in North Tustin with the Park/Land Swap Alternative. However, overall the development of both sites would result in the need for additional public services and impacts would be expected to be greater than those of the proposed project.

### **7.9.11 Utilities and Service Systems**

A park would use 3,400 gallons per acre per day with 90 percent of the area being irrigated. The City of Tustin Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) does not provide water use factors. The above water use factor was obtained from the IRWD UWMP, Table 3-1. IRWD provides land use and water use factors for

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several cities, including for the County of Orange, based on the County's General Plan land use designations. Development of the Tustin project site as a park would use approximately 22,185 gallons of water per day (7.25 acres \* 0.9 \* 3,400 = 22,185 gallons per day). The demand for all other utility services, such as wastewater, solid waste, and energy usage, would be lessened with the park land use alternative.

The senior living project uses 27,540 gallons of water per day. The senior living project would have similar water demands, regardless of its location. As with the proposed project, water conservation practices would be incorporated into the project as part of the project design features and standard conditions of approval. Development of both sites, as is proposed under the Park/Land Swap Alternative, would result in almost twice as much water use and would result in greater impacts to water supply.

### **7.9.12 Global Climate Change**

The proposed project does not have any significant and unavoidable impacts related to the emission of GHG. The amount of GHG generated by development of a park in North Tustin would be substantially less than the proposed project. Unlike the proposed project, there would be no residential energy use and vehicle trip generation that cause an increase in GHG emissions. Construction of the park would also generate fewer GHG emissions because less earthwork would be involved and the construction phase would take place over a shorter period of time. In Irvine, GHG emissions during construction and operation would be similar or less than those of the proposed project.

Overall, the Park/Land Swap Alternative would reduce the onsite project impacts because the park use would generate less GHG emissions. However, development of two sites would result with more cars on the road. Additionally, the Irvine site's distance to community serving facilities is greater than the North Tustin site. This would lead to more vehicle miles traveled overall, than compared to the proposed project. This alternative would have slightly greater operational GHG impacts, but impacts would remain less than significant.

### **7.9.13 Conclusion**

#### ***Avoid or Substantially Lessen Project Impacts***

Of the identified significant and unavoidable impacts of the proposed project, the Park/Land Swap Alternative would reduce construction air quality impacts to less than significant levels in North Tustin. The proposed underground parking facility would not be needed and grading activities would not be as intense as with the proposed project. The alternative would also reduce noise, and GHG impacts on the project site. To a lesser extent, the alternative would reduce geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, aesthetic resources, cultural resources, and recreation impacts. However, the Park/Land Swap Alternative must consider the impact of developing both parcels. By developing two sites, this alternative would increase impacts related to public services, cumulative operational air quality, cumulative traffic, and utilities and service systems as compared to the proposed project. However, although increased, impacts would remain less than significant.



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At the alternative site location, it would reduce the significant construction related air-quality impacts. In general, this alternative would reduce impacts at the North Tustin site, but cumulative impacts resulting from development of both sites would be similar to those of the proposed project.

### **Attainment of Project Objectives**

The Park/Land Swap Alternative would meet three of the seven project objectives as outlined in Section 3.2 of the Draft EIR. The development of a park on the project site would generally be consistent with the NTSP goals and policies as well as enhance the visual attractiveness of Newport Avenue and the physical environment. The park would predominantly be used for passive uses that would be compatible with the quiet residential neighborhoods. However, since the park would be a public land use, visual intrusion and trespassing onto surrounding privately-owned lots cannot be entirely prevented. The park would also not provide senior housing opportunities within the North Tustin area to meet a growing social need in unincorporated Orange County, it would not fulfill a faith-based mission of the Diocese of Orange County since it would no longer be owned by the Diocese, and it would not provide a range of housing opportunities consistent with Land Use and Design Goal C of the NTSP. The development of the senior living facility on an alternative site in the City of Irvine would not meet many of the project objectives because the basic objective of the project is to provide special needs housing to serve the population of North Tustin and unincorporated North Orange County. Consistent with the goal of providing senior citizen housing in North Tustin, objectives were developed based on the fundamental principle of developing a residential project that is compatible with the surrounding residential land uses and the goals of the General Plan and NTSP. As such, the project calls for the creation of an age restricted residential project, with privacy enhancing site design features. The land swap would require a Resolution and a majority approval vote by the County of Orange Board of Supervisors to acquire the Irvine site as well as a finding that the property to be transferred is not necessary for County purposes and the property being received is necessary for County purposes. Further, Government Code Section 25365 requires the property be “of equal value.” In addition, the Irvine site is currently zoned for agriculture and the use of the project is restricted by an overall trip cap in which the Orange Great Park Master Plan has no trips assigned to this property. Based on these facts, we conclude that substantial evidence supports the conclusion that the Park/Land Swap Alternative off-site alternative would not meet the project objectives and is not feasible for the reasons stated above.

### **7.9.2 Conclusion**

#### **Comparative Merits**

While the Park/Land Swap Alternative would avoid some of the significant and unavoidable impacts of the proposed project, it would meet only three of the seven project objectives. This alternative is not feasible because of the uncertainty of accomplishing it in a reasonable amount of time. It would require action by the County of Orange, the City of Irvine, and the property is not owned by the Diocese of Orange. This alternative would not meet the basic objectives established for the project. The Irvine site is not zoned for residential uses and has no vehicle trips assigned to it under the approved Orange County Great Park Master Plan. The development of the senior living facility on an alternative site in the City of Irvine would not meet many of the project objectives because the basic objective of the project is to provide special needs housing to serve the population of North Tustin and unincorporated North Orange County. One of the goals is to serve an aging immediately surrounding residential community and



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although this area in the future may be adjacent to residential (e.g., Heritage Fields), currently this area is surrounded by vacant land, warehouses, and the Musick jail. This is not a residential area and there are no community serving amenities. Therefore, from a location standpoint, this site does not reasonably accomplish project objectives. For all of these reasons, this site has been rejected as infeasible as an alternate development site for the proposed senior living community. However, this analysis is provided for informational purposes, as requested by public comments.

